

U.S. Department of Education
2013 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 13IN4

	Charter	Title 1	Magnet	Choice
School Type (Public Schools):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Principal: Mrs. Kara Bonin

Official School Name: Jonas E. Salk Elementary School

School Mailing Address: 3001 W 77th Avenue
Merrillville, IN 46410-3586

County: Lake State School Code Number*: 3829

Telephone: (219) 650-5304 E-mail: kbonin@mvsc.k12.in.us

Fax: (219) 650-5442 Web site/URL: http://merrillville.schoolwires.net/Domain/973

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Anthony Lux Superintendent e-mail: tmlux@mvsc.k12.in.us

District Name: Merrillville School Corporation District Phone: (219) 650-5300

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Mark Lucas

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools (Aba.Kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or its equivalent each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's AYP requirement or its equivalent in the 2012-2013 school year. Meeting AYP or its equivalent must be certified by the state. Any AYP status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2007 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for that period.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
8 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 6249

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2012 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	68	56	124
1	62	59	121
2	71	68	139
3	66	69	135
4	67	68	135
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:			654

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
49 % Black or African American
23 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
21 % White
7 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2011-2012 school year: 13%
This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Step	Description	Value
(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	40
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2011 until the end of the school year.	45
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	85
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2011	630
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.13
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	13

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 0
Number of non-English languages represented: 0
Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61%

Total number of students who qualify: 398

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 20%

Total number of students served: 128

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>28</u> Autism	<u>6</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>3</u> Deafness	<u>15</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>23</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>22</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>26</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>30</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>
Total number	<u>60</u>	<u>23</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2012.

Graduating class size: _____

Enrolled in a 4-year college or university _____%

Enrolled in a community college _____%

Enrolled in vocational training _____%

Found employment _____%

Military service _____%

Other _____%

Total _____**0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

The “Kids First” belief at Jonas E. Salk Elementary School is the key to our success. The mission of Jonas E. Salk Elementary School is to create a respectful, supportive and safe environment that prepares students to be independent learners and responsible and productive citizens. Our vision is to create a welcoming environment where everyone abides by the Salk Code and where research based best practices are implemented for both instruction and behavior. These strategies will close achievement gaps. Students will become independent learners and thinkers in an interesting, fun, and caring environment.

Jonas E. Salk Elementary School is located in the northwest Indiana town of Merrillville. Merrillville ranks 22nd in community size in the State. It is bordered by Crown Point to the south, Hobart to the east, Gary to the north, and Griffith and Schererville to the west. Salk School, one of five elementary schools in Merrillville, has an enrollment of 654 students in grades K- 4. Sixty one percent of the students receive free and reduced lunch. The ethnic makeup is 21.1% Caucasian, 22.5% Hispanic, 49.4% African-American, 0.6% Asian, and 6.3% multi-racial.

Jonas E. Salk has a staff of 41 certified teachers including a full-time literacy coach and two administrators. There are 26 general education classrooms. In addition, there is one classroom of high ability 3rd grade students and one classroom of high ability 4th grade students. The two high ability classrooms include students from the district that are identified through a set district criteria. Salk has a Title 1 teacher with four Title 1 aides and an additional remedial reading teacher. One full time instructional aide, behavior aide, librarian, and two computer aides provide additional support. Special education students receive services from a full-time least restrictive environment teacher, a paraprofessional, and part-time speech teacher. Furthermore, there are two self-contained classrooms that service students from the entire district with severe and moderate disabilities. A full-time social worker and nurse along with twenty-five support staff, ranging from custodians to cafeteria/playground aides, complete the Salk family.

Jonas E. Salk’s curriculum is aligned with both the Indiana Academic Standards and Common Core Standards. The implementation of a Balanced Literacy Framework and Inquiry math are significant in our high student achievement on ISTEP+. Salk incorporates a 90 minute uninterrupted reading block, a 45 minute writer’s workshop, and a 60 minute Inquiry math block daily. Four days a week, students work on the Fast ForWord computer program. Computer pods in every classroom allows for programs, such as Compass Learning, Acuity, and Fast Math, to supplement instruction. Title 1 and remedial reading push-in and pull out services for at-risk students provide additional instructional resources. Other programs include Spell Bowl, After School Book Club, After School tutoring, Family Reading Nights, Young Rembrandts, 6 Hour Reading Club, SRC Grade Level competition, Lego Robotics, and Deep River Reading Program.

Jonas E. Salk’s instructional practices and goals are derived from student assessment data including ISTEP+, Acuity, Running Records, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Dibels, Easy CBM, In-View, Peabody Picture Vocabulary, and grade level created assessments. Every Thursday, students are released an hour early for teacher collaboration and professional development. Grade levels analyze data and create both individual and grade level instructional plans for remediation and enrichment.

Salk students have demonstrated high academic achievement and growth on ISTEP+. Since the 2007 school year, the student pass rate for combined English Language Arts/Math portions of the ISTEP+ test has increased from 76.6% passing to the current 94.4%. Jonas E. Salk received an Exemplary Category Ranking under Public Law 221, met AYP based on No Child Left Behind, and earned the letter grade of “A” from the state of Indiana. In 2010, Salk Elementary won the state of Indiana’s “Distinguished School” Award for high academic achievement of Title 1 schools. In 2013, Salk won a national award

from the Coalition of Schools Educating Males of Color based on male students of color achieving above the State average for all students.

Salk Elementary believes creating relationships with students is essential to academic success. As a PBIS school, students are taught behavior expectations, create their own classroom expectations, and earn “Salk Stash” for demonstrating the Salk Code. Behavior interventions provide support for at-risk students. Monday morning school-wide meetings celebrate attendance, behavior, and academic success. Being a Bucketfiller recognizes students being compassionate and kind to each other.

Partnership with our community and parents has supported our success. Until 2011, we partnered with Purdue University Calumet as a Professional Development Site. The Merrillville Education Foundation has supported teacher developed projects. Local churches support our children with donations of supplies and clothing. Our PTO supports Salk by volunteering, hosting Family Nights, organizing extra-curricular programs, and donating time and resources for events.

With our Kids First mission, Salk believes that all kids will succeed. Every curriculum and instructional strategy, every professional development, every activity involving community and parents is focused on doing what is best for our students. We are proud of the success our students have achieved and will continue to raise the bar for ourselves and our students.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

A) Salk Elementary is proud of our academic accomplishments. For every year of State testing, Salk has exceeded the state average in both English Language Arts and Math, met the federal guidelines of No Child Left Behind for Adequate Yearly Progress, earned the 2010 Title 1 Distinguished School for Academic Achievement in the state of Indiana, has been in the highest category of “Exemplary” and in the first year of a new State grading systems for schools in 2012, received a grade of “A” from IDOE. In 2012, 94.4% of our students passed English Language Arts and Math ISTEP+. Over the past three years, our students have been in the 90th percentile or higher in ELA. There has been steady increase in ELA from 91.1% passing in 2010 to 97% in 2012. In 2010, 83.9% passed the math portion, 85.1% in 2011, and 95.9% passing in 2012. Salk has met AYP every year of No Child Left Behind. Our 3rd grade students exceeded the 90% passing rate on the first ever State IREAD test in 2012.

While not one student sub-group exceeded 90% passing in either Math or ELA in 2007-2008 school year, in 2011-12, every student sub-group (based on race and poverty) had at least 92% of its students passing in both math and ELA.

Salk’s high student achievement for sub-group males of color was recognized by winning the 2012-2013 Coalition of Schools Educating Males of Color national award. Males of color have performed equally or better than both the percentage of males at Jonas E. Salk Elementary School and the percentage passing of all students in the state of Indiana. Furthermore, males of color have outperformed the percentage proficient of all students in the state of Indiana every year since 2010.

B) Jonas E. Salk’s demographics have drastically changed. Over the past seven years, our percentage of minority students increased from 56% to 76%. Our free and reduced population has increased from 34% in 2005 to 60.9% in 2012. While the shift in demographics is evident, the biggest challenge has been the increase in population. In 2005, we had 479 students, grades K-5. Today, we have 654 students in grade K-4.

With the change in demographics and increase in student population, the needs of our students became more diverse. Students came to Salk Elementary with stories that we had never faced before. Many students entering kindergarten had no pre-school background. Students with special needs were increasing in numbers. Family diversity, ranging from single family homes to children being raised by grandparents or in foster care was on the rise. Students were coming to school hungry, homework not completed, and tired from sharing their bedroom with four other siblings. As the needs of our students became evident, we decided to face the challenges head on.

Five years ago, Salk was seeing an inconsistent performance trend on the ELA ISTEP+. With changing demographics of our student population and achievement gaps, a need for a change in curriculum framework was apparent.

After researching best practices, we chose a Balanced Literacy Framework. With extensive professional development from our full-time literacy coach, teachers changed their one size fits all teaching practices to a more individualized, data driven practice. Implementing the practices with fidelity has led to Salk’s ELA data showing significant improvement trend over the past three years. Since moving to a Spring test, our percent passing ELA ISTEP has increased from 83.4% to 97%. There are no achievement gaps with every subgroup having a passing rate of 94% or higher on the spring 2012 ISTEP+.

Successful implementation of a researched based reading framework led to the discussions of our math practices. Inconsistent math performance on ISTEP+ and three years decline of our 4th grade percent

passing caused our staff to look at our math instructional practices. In 2009, three 3rd grade teachers began implementing Inquiry math in partnership with Purdue University professor Diana Underwood and retired professor, Dr. Erna Yackel. Third grade student achievement data increased from 84% passing math to 94% passing ISTEP.

Using our Distinguished School's Award money, a full-time math coach was hired. Dr. Erna Yackel, along with retired Inquiry math teacher, Deb Herndon, provided extensive professional development. Summer training, weekly professional development, and daily coaching transformed instructional practices at Salk. In the spring of 2012, 95.9% of our students passed the Math ISTEP+. Our 4th grade math ended the decline in achievement improving from 76% passing to 94% passing. There were no achievement gaps with every subgroup having a passing rate of 93% or higher.

The biggest factor for our high student achievement is our belief in doing whatever it takes for students to succeed. Salk finds creative ways to catch students up within the school day through creative and innovative instructional practices. Teachers have assisted each other by taking students from other grade levels during their reading time to provide double the amount of instruction. Small groups are pulled from music, art, and gym as needed to steal time for academic remediation, but without eliminating fine arts totally from their schedules. Five classrooms are piloting classroom sets of Ipads for 1 on 1 technology assisted instruction. After school tutoring is provided for 3rd and 4th grade students. Acuity and Compass lessons are assigned for individual student needs. Fidelity of implementation is expected of all staff.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Salk is a data driven decision making school. Data is used for cluster grouping of classes, guided reading, Title 1 services, RTI, high ability identification, remediation, enrichment and instructional strategies. The school improvement team uses school-wide data to identify strengths and weaknesses, set goals for improvement, and identify strategies for implementation. Benchmark assessments for reading and math are given three times a year. Data is used to create grade level remediation plans for below benchmark students and changes in curriculum maps. Weekly or bi-weekly classroom assessments are used to adjust instruction within each individual classroom. Grade levels meet once a week for data discussions and planning. Grade level meeting notes are e-mailed to all staff. Early dismissal Thursdays allow for professional development opportunities that include cross-grade level data discussions.

A plethora of assessments are used to monitor student progress. Data from these assessments is used to adjust instructional practices. Salk also uses data to identify at-risk students and then creates an intervention plan for these students.

The following are assessments used at Salk:

- **ISTEP+:** The state test that measures student achievement based on the Indiana Academic Standards for English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The two-part test includes an applied skills test and a multiple choice test. The spring assessment data provides a summative look at our curriculum framework. Data is used to determine if our school-wide strategies are successful. Individual data is used to identify students for summer school remediation, high ability identification, and possible retention.
- **Acuity:** The Acuity Predictive test, a predictor aligned with state test, is given three times prior to the ISTEP+ test. Based on Acuity Predictive results, students are assigned computerized lessons for remediation. Small groups are formed in each grade level for remediation and enrichment purposes. Also, overall results provide information to the classroom teacher on areas of remediation needed for the entire class and lessons are adjusted accordingly.
- **IREAD:** The third grade state assessment is used to monitor if students are reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Vocabulary, Phonics, and Comprehension are tested. According to state

law, any child not passing IREAD is automatically retained. A student has two opportunities to pass the test. Data from IREAD provides information to foundational reading skills in grades K-2. Data is used to make systemic adjustments in our instructional practices.

- Scholastic Reading Counts: Students in grades 2-4 take this assessment three times a year. Lexile levels provide information as to reading level. Data is used for students reading levels for both independent reading and guided reading. School-wide data, classroom data, and individual data is used to adjust instructional practices. Students check out books from the library that match their Lexile level.
- DIBELS is a fluency assessment given three times a year. It is used with all students, but is also a formal measure of progress for Title I students.
- Easy CBM is administered three times a year for math benchmarking. Also, individual skills probes are used for RTI.
- Running Records are given formally three times a year and identifies Fountas and Pinnell reading levels for all students K-4. These levels are used to create guided reading groups.
- InView is a cognitive abilities test given to second graders for High Ability identification purposes.
- Aligned student classroom assessments are teacher created and written in the format of the ISTEP test. The format includes both open ended and multiple choices. Rubrics for open-ended test problems are utilized.

Communication of student progress to parents is evident at Salk. Parents have 24 hour access to grades, attendance, and discipline through the corporation computer system. Progress reports are sent home every 4 to 5 weeks and standards based report cards every 9 weeks. Each grade level has created a system for communication with parents. Most grade levels have Friday Folders when all graded work goes home. These folders are signed by parents and returned. Parent teacher conferences are held at the end of the first semester. Parents of students in ISTEP grades have access to student results through the state of Indiana. Salk's achievement data is shared through newsletters and on the school's webpage. Teachers have on-going student progress discussions with parents on a regular basis through phone calls, meetings, and notes home.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

At Salk Elementary we believe it is important to collaborate and share in order to identify and select the most effective instructional practices. We do this by learning from, and sharing with, others in our district, community, and beyond.

Within our district, we invite other teachers to come and observe in our classrooms as teachers implement new instructional strategies. Teachers from schools outside our district have also come to visit. Whenever we have a guest, we make sure that they can meet with the principal, literacy coach, and classroom teacher to address questions and share ideas. We follow up with e-mail or phone calls to ensure they have the information they need.

In addition, we have gone to meetings and conferences to present some of the strategies we use here at Salk Elementary. While attending we have attended other presentations to learn new strategies. We have presented to schools that are part of a local organization called LASS (Lakeshore Alliance for Student Success), and also at a State Title I conference after winning the Distinguished School award. During these presentations, we share many aspects of our school that we believe help our students achieve. These aspects include curriculum implementation of Balanced Literacy, the 90 minute reading block, and

Inquiry Math. In addition, we include our behavior expectation (PBIS) and how our schedule works within our classrooms.

Up until last year, Salk Elementary was a Professional Development Site in partnership with Purdue University Calumet in the areas of English Language Arts and Diverse Needs. Students from PUC spent two days a week observing and practicing implementation of strategies for their education block.

Most recently, a group of teachers from our school were asked to present at the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) conference held in Chicago, Illinois. Many different educators from across the country were in attendance and learned how we teach Inquiry math to our students at Salk Elementary. Salk's Inquiry teacher leaders have also presented at Purdue University Mathematic Conference.

Salk's Principal collaborated with other administrators at the Indiana Principal Leadership Academy and has given presentations to education students from Purdue University Calumet.

Collaboration with parents is imperative to our success. Results from parent surveys are used for continuous improvement. Student progress is shared continuously with data sheets. Teachers keep parents informed regularly through conferences, emails, phone calls, and notes.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Engaging families and community is an important part to a school's success. Parents are encouraged to be involved. Our PTO is involved a variety of ways from fundraising to organizing family nights. Parent volunteers are used to make phone calls, to donate items for events, or to run the events. Parents also help throughout the day. Parent volunteers help count and distribute flyers, organize baggie books for teachers, and help out in the classrooms. One parent representative is on the School's Improvement team and the corporation's Advisory Board. Parents have also shared their talents with our students. Parents have volunteered to speak at Career Day and also at Monday Morning Meeting for special weeks like Red Ribbon Week.

Communication is valued at Salk Elementary. Our school's webpage provides a wealth of information to parents. All newsletters including The Monthly Salk Scoop and Grade Level Fridge Facts are found on the webpage. A school calendar provides a quick look at upcoming events. A weekly phone message is sent by the principal with positive news and upcoming events. Other resources for parents, such as helpful websites, ISTEP+ data, instructional resources, and printable copies of anything sent home can be found on the website.

Salk provides information and assistance to parents in helping with schoolwork. Fridge Facts are sent home weekly by each grade level where tips for parents on how to help at home can be found. Parent reading nights and math nights are held to assist parents in ways to work with their child at home. Our school's parent resource room allows parents the opportunity to check out materials to use at home with their child. Materials include academic games, flashcards, books, books on tape, and tip brochures on topics ranging from ADHD to the death of family member.

Our social worker helps parents find ways to access community resources. Some parents may not want the help, while time and transportation interfere with others. We are continuing to find ways to bring resources to our students. Local churches have provided school supplies for our students. Another example is our Mobile Dentist. Our school now provides one free cleaning for our children. In the summer, we provide free breakfast and lunch to anyone less than 18 years of age. Bringing resources to our families will be important to continuing our success.

Salk's bi-annual parent survey consistently rates 98% or higher on parent satisfaction.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Curriculum maps in all subjects are aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards and Common Core standards. Continuous improvement is ensured by frequent review of school assessments based on these standards.

Reading: Salk Elementary implements a Balanced Literacy Framework based on the teachings of Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. Reading is an active process that incorporates “thinking, talking, and writing” about reading. Teachers incorporate guided reading and literature study using inquiry circles and book studies, interactive read alouds, shared reading, reader’s theater, phonics/word study, and poetry. Reading mini-lessons teach specific comprehension strategies including: making connections, inferring, asking questions, determining importance, creating images, synthesizing, and fix-up strategies. Reading instruction is integrated cross curriculum with literacy standards implemented in science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. An additional daily 30 minute Writer’s Workshop, using corporation developed writing genre units with mini-lessons teaching craft of writing and grammar, independent student writing, conferencing, and sharing, completes our ELA instruction.

Mathematics instruction at Salk is based on an Inquiry approach. This researched based approach focuses on students’ conceptual development of the foundational mathematics concepts as opposed to skills, rules, and procedures in traditional math approaches. Student collaboration in solving problems develops deep understanding and reasoning. Instruction is differentiated. In a 60 minute math block, students develop personally meaningful ways of reason which become the basis for extensive class discussion designed to advance the mathematical learning for all students. Common vocabulary, technology, manipulatives, problem solving, and technology supplement our math instruction. Math coaches provide on-going professional development.

Science is integrated into our ELA and math curriculum. Units of study that include guest speakers, projects, experiments, and field trips provide opportunities for students to continue the Inquiry experience and real world application.

Social Studies is integrated across the curriculum. Students learn to listen, analyze, communicate, collaborate, and make decisions; all skills needed to be a productive citizen. Purposeful and meaningful experiences allow students to make connections to self and world. As a diverse school community, students learn to appreciate differences. Studies of the past and present, community service projects and character education instill the value of citizenship.

Music’s goal is to create young musicians who are able to feel pulse and move with that pulse; are tuneful, have tunes in their heads and learn to coordinate their voices to sing those tunes; and artful, able to respond to music emphasizing both national and state standards. Math, literacy, social studies and science are supported through music instruction.

Art emphasizes elements and the principles of design. Hands-on projects support integrated standards including literacy, math, social studies, and science.

Physical Education/Health curriculum is filled with fitness based activities, lifetime activity skills, and brain based activities that build neural pathways. The Great Body Shop extends healthy living into the classroom. Physical opportunities include brain breaks, field day, and jump-a-thon.

Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students attend computer class four days a week for 45 minutes working on Fast ForWord, a brain based product designed to strengthen memory, attention,

processing rate, and sequencing in order to increase learning capacity. All classrooms have four computers that students utilize daily for supplemental instruction and testing on programs such as Compass Learning, Acuity, Fast Math, Scholastic Reading, Reading Assistant, and internet academic sites. Students also use the internet for research papers, power point projects, educational video clips, etc. Five classrooms pilot 1:1 computing with the Ipad. . Salk classrooms include Elmos and projectors and 40 inch flat screen televisions connected to teachers' computers. Salk uses technology for the school website, parent/school communication, homework hotline, digital cameras, flip cameras, and clickers.

2. Reading/English:

Salk implements best practices through a Balanced Literacy Framework for Reading that focuses on engaging students with text through listening, reading, and responding. A 90 minute uninterrupted block includes several components.

A thirty minute whole group Language Word Study block includes reading mini-lessons, interactive read alouds, interactive writing, shared reading, poetry, reader's theater, interactive vocabulary, and phonics/ word study. Rigby's Literacy by Design, Fountas and Pinnell Phonics and Word Study kits, Words Their Way, and other resources provide instructional materials utilized in this block. Sixty minutes small-group instruction including guided reading using leveled texts, inquiry literature circles using novels, independent sustained silent reading with reader's response notebooks, and managed independent literacy stations complete the block.

Data drives our reading instruction. Students are formally benchmarked three times a year using Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark kits, DIBELS, Word Identification, and Rigby Comprehension test. Reading progress is monitored using Acuity, Easy CBM, SRC Reading, cold reads, antidotal notes from guided reading, and grade level aligned classroom assessments. Data discussions are held to make grade level individualized remediation plans. Individualized Compass and Acuity lessons are assigned to individuals and double blocks of guided reading are implemented. Additional support, using instructional aides, parent volunteers, staff volunteers, and the principals are given to students not at benchmark. At-risk students also receive support, in addition to the 90 minute block, from Title I, Remedial reading, and RTI. Researched based interventions such as, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, Reciprocal Teaching, Tim Raskinski's Word Ladders, Tucker Hand Signs, Frys Fluency Phrases, SRA Skills series, double guided reading block, Reading Assistant, Compass Learning, and Flocabulary are used.

Home reading is encouraged by hosting family reading nights, providing a parent resource library, and weekly grade level fridge facts. Reading incentives for students are used, too.

Our teacher's toolbox is always being filled with new knowledge of best practices. Our full-time literacy coach provides modeling, coaching, and conferencing. Book studies, such as "Goodbye Round Robin Reading" by Tim Raskinski, and "Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency" by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, continue our growth as educators. Teachers are encouraged to watch webinars and attend workshops in which they share ideas with staff. Non-negotiable reading practices, created by the staff, set the aligned expectations and practices for reading instruction in each classroom.

Non-negotiables for Salk

- 60 minute reader's workshop with daily guided reading meeting with minimum of three groups per day. Lowest group will be seen daily in guided reading.
- Reader's workshop will include literacy based managed independent learning stations in kindergarten thru second grade and reader's response notebooks and literature circles in third and fourth grade.

- Anecdotal notes will be taken four times per grading period per student.
- Anchor charts will hang in classrooms.
- Constructed responses will be modeled once a week in kindergarten and first grade. Grades second thru fourth will practice constructed responses once a week.
- Two interactive read alouds per week.
- Name charts will be completed and hung by whole group instruction area in grades K-1.
- Formal running records will be completed three times per year for every student.
- In addition to the 90 minute uninterrupted reading block, a 45 minute writer's workshop block will be implemented.

3. Mathematics:

Mathematics instruction at Salk is based on the Inquiry approach to mathematics instruction. Three years ago, a need for change in our math instruction was identified based on student achievement data. With support from Dr. Erna Yackel and Diana Underwood at Purdue University Calumet, a team of teachers began to implement Inquiry strategies into their classrooms. After the initial success of these classes, a visit to a high achieving school implementing Inquiry approach, observation of students, and shared research of mathematical instruction, our staff chose to move from a traditional approach to an Inquiry approach. Professional development money was used to provide summer training and two coaches for staff as school-wide implementation began.

Inquiry is a research-based approach that focuses on students' conceptual development of the foundational mathematical concepts, as opposed to an approach that focuses on mathematics as skills, rules and procedures. Students work both collaboratively in small groups and independently to solve problems and instructional tasks specifically designed to promote deep conceptual understanding. Throughout, emphasis is on students' developing personally meaningful ways of reasoning which then becomes the basis for extensive class discussions designed to advance the mathematical learning of all students in the class.

Instruction is differentiated in that students each work at their own level of sophistication. In this sense, it is the students themselves who provide the differentiation. For example, in a second grade classroom some students might solve the problem 42-18 using Unifix cubes packaged in tens while others might use purely numerical methods based on their understanding of coordinating tens and ones. The teacher capitalizes on the variety of levels of sophistication in the whole class discussion that follows collaborative or individual work. Through carefully orchestrated discussions, and with the mathematical goals in mind, the teacher advances the mathematical learning of the class as a whole and the mathematical learning of each individual student. In this way the least sophisticated students' progress while, at the same time, the most sophisticated students advance. Supplemental traditional math activities include Fast Math, Mountain Math, Problem of the Day, and Daily Oral Math spiral reviews.

Similar to our reading framework, students are benchmarked three times a year using Easy CBM and a math fact assessment. Intervention instruction for at risk students including RTI is provided individually through assigned computer instruction, small group using aides, staff volunteers, teachers, and principals, and as a grade on regrouping Thursday.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Social Studies is integrated across the curriculum. Students learn to listen, analyze, communicate, collaborate, and make decisions; all skills needed to be a productive citizen. Purposeful and meaningful

experiences allow students to make connections to self and world. As a diverse school community, students learn to appreciate differences, understand the value of community service, and learn how to be productive citizens with the development of social-emotional needs.

Salk's Social Studies curriculum is integrated in all phases of our school day. In classrooms, teachers incorporate social studies through Reader's and Writer's workshop, shared reading, interactive read alouds, discussion and debate of current events, art projects. School wide events include mock elections, student government, Earth Day activities, Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo activities, and field trips.

Citizenship and sense of community begins weekly with our School-wide Monday Morning Meeting. Life skills such as leadership and responsibility are instilled through literature, videos, and discussions. Community members regularly visit our school to give real life examples of outstanding citizenship including: lawyers, farmers, police officers, firefighters, librarians, environmentalists.

Salk's commitment to teaching students the life skills needed to be productive citizens is evident daily. Through PBIS, students are taught behavioral expectations. Students are taught formal behavior and formal language. Students are taught that school is their job. At your job, your behavior is one of a productive citizen. Productive citizenship skill includes: always speaking in complete sentences with formal English language, using manners including please and thank you, debate respectfully in discussions, compromising; active listening; respecting difference. These skills and practices are the expectation for our school. We teach, model, and reward students for displaying these expectations. Pride and ownership of our school community are encouraged through the Golden Dustpan and Golden Spatula award.

Jonas E. Salk's commitment to community service is evident. As a Bucketfilling school, our value of helping others is extended to others outside of our school. We encourage all of our students to become involved in some way in helping others. Projects include: "Jars of Love" for local food bank; "Coats for Kids" providing free coats to children in our community; "Compassionate Coins" donating to Red Cross for current disaster relief; Riley's Children Hospital jump-a-thon. Students volunteer to assist younger student and special needs students.

Compassion is celebrated through daily announcements written by students and staff. School wide goals, such as our compassion chain, create a sense of community. Brag tags recognize responsibility. Student of the Month honors citizenship, responsibility, and effort.

5. Instructional Methods:

Salk Elementary prides itself on being a leader of change in the Merrillville Community School Corporation. Our "No Excuses" belief leads to our differentiated instructional practices. Meeting the needs of all learners through the use of various modalities, extra time, and instructional stretch is evident daily. Formative and summative data guides instructional decisions and strategies used. Salk meets the needs of all learners ranging from severely handicapped to high ability.

Salk's ELA curriculum framework is differentiated through flexible grouping in reader's workshop. Our Inquiry math framework uses activities and strategies that allow students to make sense of math in their own way. Both frameworks provide opportunities for teachers to meet students at their level and plan lessons that move students on a continuum of learning.

Salk teachers utilize as many instructional strategies as possible to meet the needs of all students. Strategies from book studies, workshops, and coaching include but are not limited to: Lori Oczkus's *Reciprocal Teaching*, Tucker Signing, Jolly Phonics, Inquiry Math, Math Their Way, Words Their Way, SRA Skills, Marzano's *Art and Science of Teaching*; *Strategies for Teaching Boys and Girls*; strategies from Tim Raskinski's *Fluent Reader*; strategies from *Goodbye Round Robin Reading*; *The Book Whisperer*, 6+1 Traits of Writing, Fountas and Pinnell, *Guided Reading*, Leveled Literacy Intervention.

Salk utilizes every second for instructional purposes. Staff, including copy aides, librarians, and principals, donate extra time to work with students. Extra instructional time includes double blocking of guided reading, cross-grade level instruction, flexible scheduling from special area teachers, lunch bunch groups, after-school tutoring and parent helpers. Title 1 and remedial reading supplement instruction through a push-in and pull-out program.

RTI and Special Education provide additional support for at-risk and identified students with IEP's. Inclusive and resource room services are utilized to meet individual needs. Two classrooms for severely handicapped students include a sensory room, physical and occupational therapy to meet their individual needs. Speech and Language services are provided in pull-out setting. Salk's two classrooms of high ability students are provided instruction at an accelerated rate through a project based curriculum.

Salk individualizes instruction through computer programs. Lessons are assigned to meet both remediation and enrichment needs of students. Computer pods and Ipads provide daily practice for students. Lessons include Acuity, SRC, Compass Learning, Reading Assistant, Fast ForWord, Fast Math, internet sites, and purchased apps for math and reading.

6. Professional Development:

Salk's commitment to professional development is another key to our success. Aligned with our School Improvement Plan, all professional development is based on improving student learning.

Every Thursday, students are dismissed an hour early to provide professional development time for our teachers. Based on student data, school improvement goals, corporation goals, and teacher need, the school improvement team plans the year for professional learning. Both the literacy coach and the math coaches, along with teacher and principal leaders, provide aligned and sustained professional development.

Salk's shift to a research based approach to teaching reading and math required much professional development. Our staff received 60 hours of professional development from 2009-2011. The full time Literacy coach was essential to our reading success. Currently, the literacy coach works on a three week cycle, individually coaching all 26 staff members.

Salk's math Inquiry training began two years ago. A week-long summer workshop was provided by Dr. Yackel, retired University Math Chair, and Deb Herndon, retired Inquiry elementary school teacher. These consultants coached all teachers individually once a week. Grade levels met once a week for an entire year to receive additional training from them.

Salk's new teachers are given a mentor for two years. All new teachers participate in week long training prior to school starting. Coaches provide additional professional development sessions to new teachers. New teachers are supported with grade level team meetings once a week as they provide guidance and support of instructional practices, too. Team notes, included instructional ideas and strategies, are shared with all staff extending our professional collaboration and growth.

The Merrillville Community School Corporation provides opportunities for staff to attend professional seminars, conferences in the region, state, and nationally. Attendees are expected to share what they learned with staff. Workshops attended: Common Core, Inquiry Circles, Kristina Smeckens, Tim Rasinski, State Kindergarten Conference, PBIS. Crisis Intervention Training, and Reciprocal teaching.

Salk teachers collaborate and share ideas constantly. Peer observations, professional book studies, research articles, and ideas from internet sites and teacher resource books, continue professional growth on a daily basis. With the Kid's First mentality, Salk's reflective practices continue to add strategies to our instructional toolbox.

7. School Leadership:

The “Kid’s First” principal/instructional leader at Jonas E. Salk Elementary is data driven with the expectation that all students will succeed. Through a collaborative effort with the leadership team, staff and parents, the principal trains and supports the implementation of research based best practices. High expectations for staff along with accountability for implementation have led to Salk’s success.

The “Kid’s First” principal sets clear expectations for both students and staff. Student expectations begin at weekly Monday Morning Meeting and continue throughout the week. Greeting students, teaching and expecting formal behavior, visiting classrooms daily, reinforcing positive behavior and effort, celebrating success, providing remediation herself to groups of students, and having conversations with students about their academic data are all examples of her “No Excuses” belief. The principal models the belief that we are all responsible for student success.

The principal’s “with-it-ness” leads a unified staff to doing what’s best for kids. Clear expectations created in collaboration with the School Improvement Committee and staff includes weekly grade level meeting format, Balanced Literacy non-negotiables, Inquiry math expectations, and data discussion meetings. The principal researches best practices, shares knowledge with staff, and guides shifts in curriculum practices in the best interest of kids. Grade and cross grade level meetings, shared strategies and practices, discussion of professional articles, and book studies, are all components of our Salk learning community. The principal recognizes and encourages staff members with “pocket praises”, G.O.O.F.Y. (Get Out of ForWord Yeah!) certificates, and staff celebrations.

Others contribute to school leadership as well. The assistant principal leads our PBIS team, H.U.G. mentoring program, and RTI implementation. Our social worker serves as a family resource, liaison between parents and school, teaches the “Why Try” program, and provides behavioral resources for our staff to implement. The nurse helps our Salk family with health care issues, gives classroom presentations, and works with teachers to create interventions and accommodations based on health needs of children. The literacy and math coaches provide leadership for staff through professional development, individual coaching, data analysis meetings, and participation in grade level meetings. All staff members have leadership responsibilities within their grade level. Most staff are members of school committees. Our PTO provides parent leadership for School Improvement Committee, Family Nights, PTO meetings, Title 1 Parent Meetings, parent surveys, and parent volunteers.

The leadership of the Salk principal, along with the collaboration of all stakeholders, has led to Salk’s high performance and success.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: ISTEP+

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Passing	94	93	88	84	80
Pass +	38	31	41	25	21
Number of students tested	141	134	112	114	119
Percent of total students tested	97	97	96	93	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	5	5	8	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	3	4	7	6
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Total Passing	95	91	88	77	78
Pass +	29	25	38	18	18
Number of students tested	85	79	65	56	50
2. African American Students					
Total Passing	94	93	82	82	71
Pass +	24	25	32	18	0
Number of students tested	71	57	50	44	45
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Total Passing	93	96	91	91	92
Pass +	41	35	45	27	25
Number of students tested	29	23	11	11	12
4. Special Education Students					
Total Passing			64	90	60
Pass +			0	30	20
Number of students tested			11	10	10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Total Passing					
Pass +					
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Total Passing	97	93	91	89	85
Pass +	59	38	48	32	35
Number of students tested	29	40	33	44	48
NOTES: There were fewer than 10 students in the test group with IEPs™s in 3rd and 4th grade. The State of Indiana masks results with fewer than 10 students due to federal privacy laws. State testing was changed from Fall to Spring testing during the 2008-2009 school year. Fall administration tested the previous year Indiana Standards (i.e. 4th grade Fall testing assessed 3rd grade standards from previous year).					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: ISTEP+

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Passing	94	93	95	85	86
Pass +	12	14	19	8	13
Number of students tested	141	134	112	114	119
Percent of total students tested	97	97	96	93	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	5	5	8	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3	3	4	7	6
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Total Passing	94	90	95	79	86
Pass +	11	9	12	2	6
Number of students tested	85	79	65	56	50
2. African American Students					
Total Passing	93	93	92	84	84
Pass +	4	12	16	2	9
Number of students tested	71	57	50	44	45
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Total Passing	90	91	100	91	92
Pass +	14	9	9	9	8
Number of students tested	29	23	11	11	12
4. Special Education Students					
Total Passing			73	70	80
Pass +			0	0	10
Number of students tested			11	10	10
5. English Language Learner Students					
Total Passing					
Pass +					
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Total Passing	100	95	94	86	85
Pass +	21	20	24	11	17
Number of students tested	29	40	33	44	48
NOTES:					
There were fewer than 10 students in the test group with IEPs™s in 3rd and 4th grade. The State of Indiana masks results with fewer than 10 students due to federal privacy laws. State testing was changed from Fall to Spring testing during the 2008-2009 school year. Fall administration tested the previous year Indiana Standards (i.e. 4th grade Fall testing assessed 3rd grade standards from previous year).					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: ISTEP+

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Passing	94	75	79	82	82
Pass+	39	21	25	25	17
Number of students tested	134	138	126	110	111
Percent of total students tested	95	97	95	96	93
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	5	7	5	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3	5	4	7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Total Passing	95	72	74	78	77
Pass+	32	14	12	20	11
Number of students tested	77	74	66	49	44
2. African American Students					
Total Passing	88	69	69	79	72
Pass+	20	10	14	21	9
Number of students tested	59	62	59	43	43
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Total Passing	96	90	100	92	86
Pass+	52	48	40	15	0
Number of students tested	25	21	10	13	14
4. Special Education Students					
Total Passing		60			
Pass+		0			
Number of students tested		10			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Total Passing					
Pass+					
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Total Passing	100	80	93	80	88
Pass+	55	23	33	22	21
Number of students tested	38	35	40	41	42
NOTES:					
There were fewer than 10 students in the test group with IEPs™s in 3rd and 4th grade. The State of Indiana masks results with fewer than 10 students due to federal privacy laws. State testing was changed from Fall to Spring testing during the 2008-2009 school year. Fall administration tested the previous year Indiana Standards (i.e. 4th grade Fall testing assessed 3rd grade standards from previous year).					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: ISTEP+

Edition/Publication Year: 2009

Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill

	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008
Testing Month	May	May	May	Mar	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Passing	95	89	87	80	87
Pass +	24	16	17	12	8
Number of students tested	134	138	126	110	111
Percent of total students tested	95	97	95	96	93
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	5	7	5	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	3	5	4	7
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Total Passing	96	88	85	80	84
Pass +	17	20	11	4	9
Number of students tested	77	74	66	49	44
2. African American Students					
Total Passing	92	85	83	79	81
Pass +	15	11	10	5	5
Number of students tested	59	62	59	43	43
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Total Passing	96	100	100	62	86
Pass +	24	19	20	0	0
Number of students tested	25	21	10	13	14
4. Special Education Students					
Total Passing		70			
Pass +		10			
Number of students tested		10			
5. English Language Learner Students					
Total Passing					
Pass +					
Number of students tested					
6. White					
Total Passing	100	86	90	88	90
Pass +	37	11	25	12	10
Number of students tested	38	35	40	41	42
NOTES: There were fewer than 10 students in the test group with IEPs™s in 3rd and 4th grade. The State of Indiana masks results with fewer than 10 students due to federal privacy laws. State testing was changed from Fall to Spring testing during the 2008-2009 school year. Fall administration tested the previous year Indiana Standards (i.e. 4th grade Fall testing assessed 3rd grade standards from previous year).					